Jim Henson's™
THE STORYTELLER™
Tale One of Four
Giants
ARCHAIA™
CONOR NOLAN

the Deach's Son

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meeph mur meffer mem um mink!
IT'S FRIGHTFULLY DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND YOU, MY FRIEND. PERHAPS TAKE THE BASKET OUT OF YOUR MOUTH?
SORRY I'M SO LATE. THESE ARE HEAVIER THAN THEY LOOK!
MY WORD! YOU WEREN'T JOKING, THESE PEACHES ARE GIANT!
ALL THE BETTER FOR OUR PIE! PERHAPS WE'LL MAKE MORE THAN ONE.
AHH... HOME.

I'M EXHAUSTED. IF YOU FIND ANY GRUBS, *YOU* CAN RETURN THEM.
REST YOUR BONES FOR A SPELL, YOU'VE REMINDED ME OF A TALE. LET THE WARMTH OF HEARTH AND HOME KEEP YOU AWHILE AS I TELL YOU OF THE GIANT BORN FROM A PEACH'S PIT.
IF "HOME" IS A SPACE FILLED WITH COMFORT, LOVE, AND SECURITY...
...then a peasant woman and her peasant husband had room for one more.

Despite having little money, a small home, and relentless hunger, the thing the couple wanted most was a child.
LOOK, MY LOVE. LOOK AT THIS BOUNTY! I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE MY EYES.
HEAVENS! SCARCELY CAN I BELIEVE MY OWN! WE'LL HAVE PEACH EVERY MEAL FOR A YEAR!
The couple's prayers had been answered in a *big* way...
WHAT IS IT?
A *CHILD*. A BABY BOY.

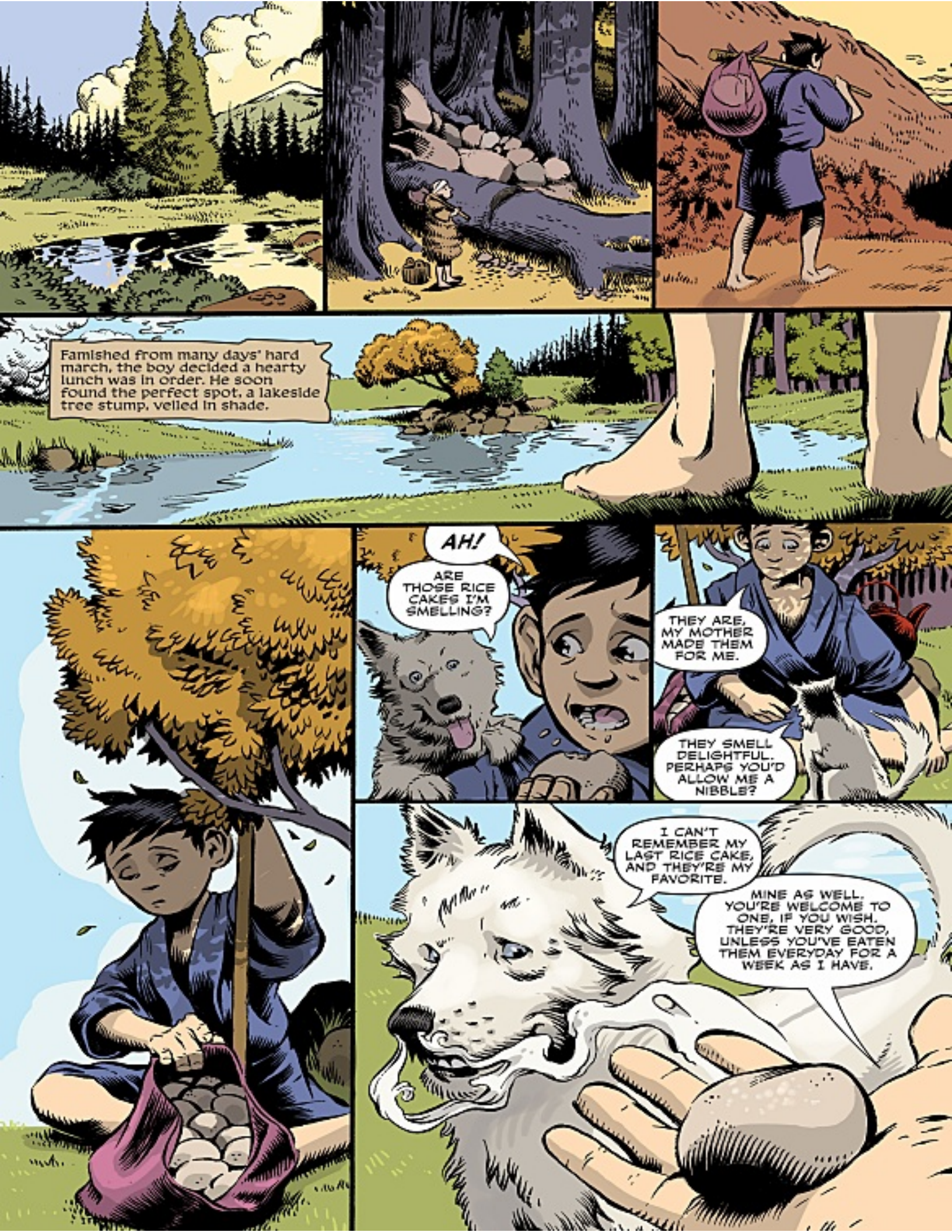
Soon they found the rearing of the child to be a *tall* order. But they loved him deeply and supported his differences.
A sentiment unshared by their fellow villagers, who had been raised on grim tales of *evil, ravenous giants.*

HE'S PROBABLY BIDING HIS TIME BEFORE HE EATS US *ALL.*
GROWN THREE FOLD HIS SIZE SINCE THIS TIME LAST *FALL!*
HEARD HE PROWLS AT NIGHT, LOOKING FOR VICTIMS TO *MAUL.*
ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN BEFORE HE TAKES US FOR SLAVES, TO GROVEL AND *CRAWL!*
AND ALL OF THIS NONSENSE BECAUSE THE BOY WAS *TALL.*

The townsfolk worked themselves into a frenzy. Rumor and gossip spread like a *flame*, igniting a posse filled with malicious intent. The boy was made into a *monster*, and they were bent on ridding their village of him.
GO AWAY!
BE GONE, AND DON'T RETURN!
MONSTER!
WHO ARE THEY?

WHO IS IT? WHAT'S GOING ON?
I DON'T KNOW, I CAN'T SEE OVER THE CROWD.
PLEASE, WE ARE DESPERATE FOR FOOD AND SHELTER. WE'VE BEEN CAST FROM OUR HOMES, ROBBED OF EVERYTHING.
OGRES...
OGRES?!
DID SHE SAY OGRES?
THEY TORE US FROM OUR BEDS. WE'VE TRAVELED FOR WHAT FEELS LIKE A LIFETIME IN SEARCH OF SOMEWHERE TO BEGIN OUR LIVES ANEW, BUT OUR HEARTS BLEED FOR OUR LOST HOMES.
THOSE POOR PEOPLE.
IMAGINE, AN OGRE *RAIDING PARTY*. IT RATTLES MY BONES TO THINK ABOUT.
WAIT!

NO ONE SHOULD BE WITHOUT A HOME. I'M YOUNG BUT I'M LARGE, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, UNAFRAID.
PERHAPS IF I'M FRIGHTFUL TO MY PEOPLE, OGRES WILL FEEL SIMILARLY. I WILL RETURN YOUR HOME TO YOU, I SWEAR IT.
THE DISPLACED PEOPLE WERE GRATEFUL TO ACCEPT THE GIANT'S HELP, BUT RELIEF TURNED TO SINCERE SOLEMNNESS WHEN THEY SPOKE OF THE LEADER OF THE OGRE HORDE, THE TERRIBLE OGRE KING.
THE MOB'S FIERY BEHAVIOR, EXISTING ONLY MOMENTS BEFORE, WAS QUENCHED AND THEIR BLOOD TURNED COLD WHEN THEY HEARD THE VILE ACCOUNTS OF THE OGRE KING'S DOINGS.
?
MY PEACH, IT IS TOO DANGEROUS, PERHAPS YOU SHOULDN'T GO.
AND THE DISTANCE SO FAR.
But there was no stopping the boy. The giant heart in his giant body broke for these people. He'd not only reclaim the people's homes, but he'd prove himself to his neighbors, whom despite his intent, still distrusted him.
BE CAREFUL, MY SON. RETURN TO US.
DON'T FORGET YOUR SATCHEL. IT'S JUST A RATTY OLD BEDSHEET BUT I STITCHED A PEACH INTO IT FOR GOOD LUCK.
SHE'S BEING HUMBLE. SHE ALSO FILLED IT WITH YOUR FAVORITE, RICE CAKES, ENOUGH TO LAST THE JOURNEY AND THEN SOME!

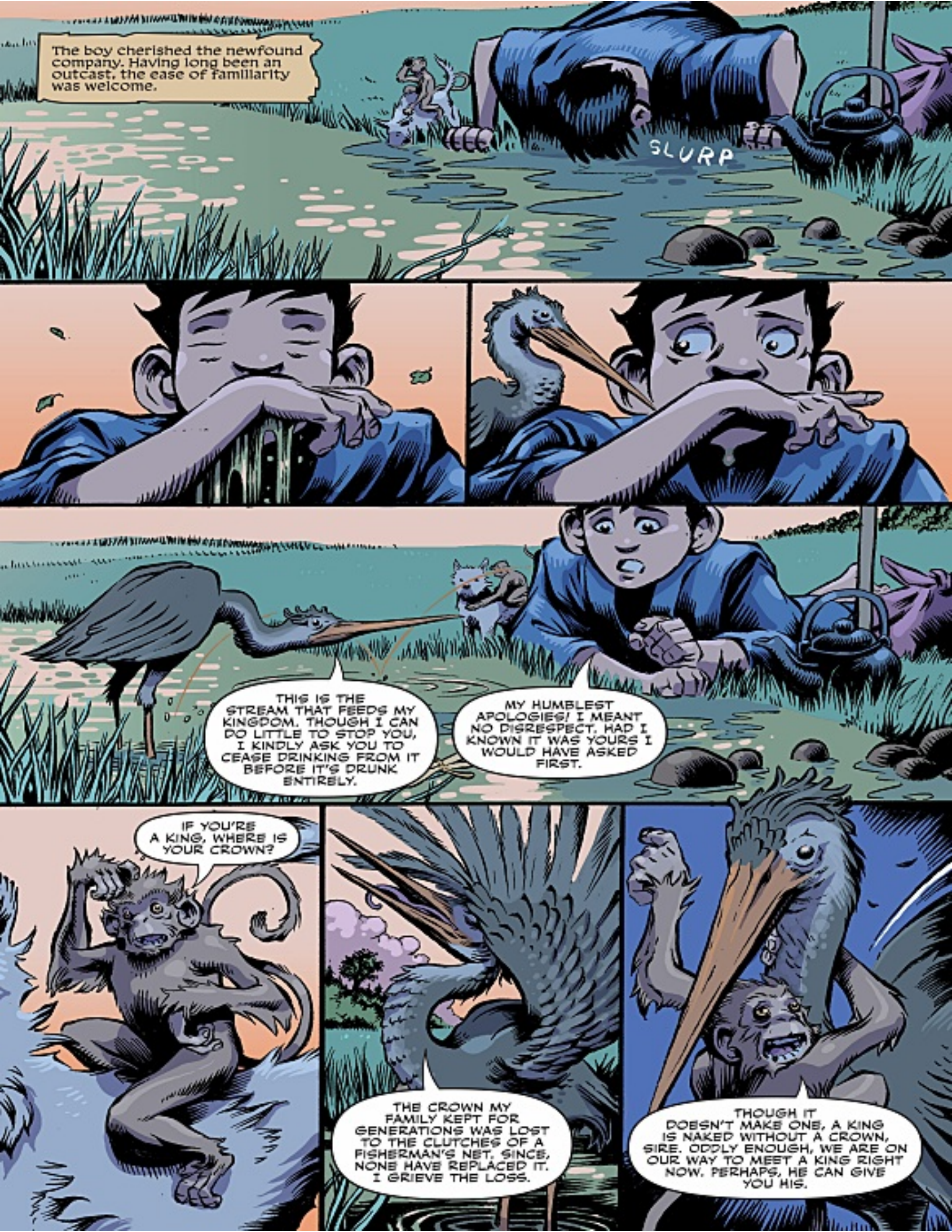

Famished from many days' hard march, the boy decided a hearty lunch was in order. He soon found the perfect spot, a lakeside tree stump, veiled in shade.
AH! ARE THOSE RICE CAKES I'M SMELLING?
THEY ARE, MY MOTHER MADE THEM FOR ME.
THEY SMELL DELIGHTFUL. PERHAPS YOU'D ALLOW ME A NIBBLE?
I CAN'T REMEMBER MY LAST RICE CAKE, AND THEY'RE MY FAVORITE.
MINE AS WELL. YOU'RE WELCOME TO ONE, IF YOU WISH. THEY'RE VERY GOOD, UNLESS YOU'VE EATEN THEM EVERYDAY FOR A WEEK AS I HAVE.

THE ROAD AHEAD, BESIDES BEING DIFFICULT, WAS ALSO LONELY. THE BOY SAW THE BENEFIT OF COMPANY, AND AFTER SOME DISCUSSION HE GREW TO LIKE THE DOG VERY MUCH. SO A DEAL WAS STRUCK.
ONE THOUSAND RICE CAKES.
ONE THOUSAND?! I DON'T HAVE NEARLY THAT MANY. THOUGH, IF YOU'LL ACCOMPANY ME AND WE MAKE IT BACK HOME, I'M SURE MY MOTHER WOULD MAKE AS MANY AS YOU WANT.
MY HOLLOW STOMACH RUMBLES THAT IT "ACCEPTS YOUR TERMS." LEAD THE WAY, WE GO TOGETHER TO THE OGRE KING.

CRACK
WHAT WAS THAT?
IT'S ME, JUST MISERABLE ME. LOWLY, MISERABLE, INSUFFERABLE ME.
YOU MUST HAVE CERTAINLY BEEN CURSED BY GYPSIES TO HAVE RUN INTO ME. OH, HOW MISERABLE I AM. TRAGIC, PENNILESS ME.
HOW I WISH I HAD A COIN, A SINGLE COIN. PERHAPS I WOULD CEASE TO BE SO MISERABLE. YES, I THINK I WOULD.
YOU'RE WELCOME TO OUR FIRE, FRIEND, BUT I'M AFRAID WE HAVEN'T ANY COIN TO GIVE YOU.
SNIFF SNIFF
TYPICAL. WELL THEN, I'LL JUST WARM MY MISERABLE HANDS AND BE ON MY WAY TO BEG ELSEWHERE.

IT'S TOO BAD YOU AREN'T COMING WITH US TO MEET THE OGRES. I'VE HEARD SUCH A MEDLEY OF RUMORS ABOUT THEIR AMASSED FORTUNE. PERHAPS SOME OF IT COULD HAVE BEEN YOURS.
A FORTUNE?! YOU FIB.
IT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE AN EXTRA HAND TO CARRY IT ALL...
SAY NO MORE! AN EXTRA HAND YOU HAVE. FOR ADVENTURE AND RICHES, I'M YOURS.
I MAY BE SMALL BUT MY STRENGTH KNOWS NO LIMITS WHEN BURDENED WITH GOLD!

MY LORD!
SPEAK.
MY LORD, A HUMAN THE LIKES I'VE NEVER SEEN.
TALL AS BAMBOO AND WALKS IN STRIDES THAT SHAKES DEAD LEAVES OFF TREES.
BUFFOONERY! I THOUGHT YOU TO BE SCOUTS, NOT JESTERS. NONE ARE TALLER THAN I, ESPECIALLY NOT A HUMAN.
WE LIE NOT! COME, SEE WITH YOUR OWN EYES.


The boy cherished the newfound company. Having long been an outcast, the ease of familiarity was welcome.
SLURP
THIS IS THE STREAM THAT FEEDS MY KINGDOM. THOUGH I CAN DO LITTLE TO STOP YOU, I KINDLY ASK YOU TO CEASE DRINKING FROM IT BEFORE IT'S DRUNK ENTIRELY.
MY HUMBLEST APOLOGIES! I MEANT NO DISRESPECT. HAD I KNOWN IT WAS YOURS I WOULD HAVE ASKED FIRST.
IF YOU'RE A KING, WHERE IS YOUR CROWN?
THE CROWN MY FAMILY KEPT FOR GENERATIONS WAS LOST TO THE CLUTCHES OF A FISHERMAN'S NET. SINCE, NONE HAVE REPLACED IT. I GRIEVE THE LOSS.
THOUGH IT DOESN'T MAKE ONE, A KING IS NAKED WITHOUT A CROWN, SIRE. ODDLY ENOUGH, WE ARE ON OUR WAY TO MEET A KING RIGHT NOW. PERHAPS, HE CAN GIVE YOU HIS.

With a fellowship formed and their task close at hand, the devious deeds of the Ogres began to rear their ugly heads.
THEY'RE CLOSE, ABOUT HALF A DAY AWAY. THEY'RE AN UGLY LOT, AND SMELL WORSE THAN MONKEY.
WE'VE COME THIS FAR, WHAT DO WE DO NOW? HOW DO WE REPEL SUCH A HOST?
I HAVE AN IDEA.

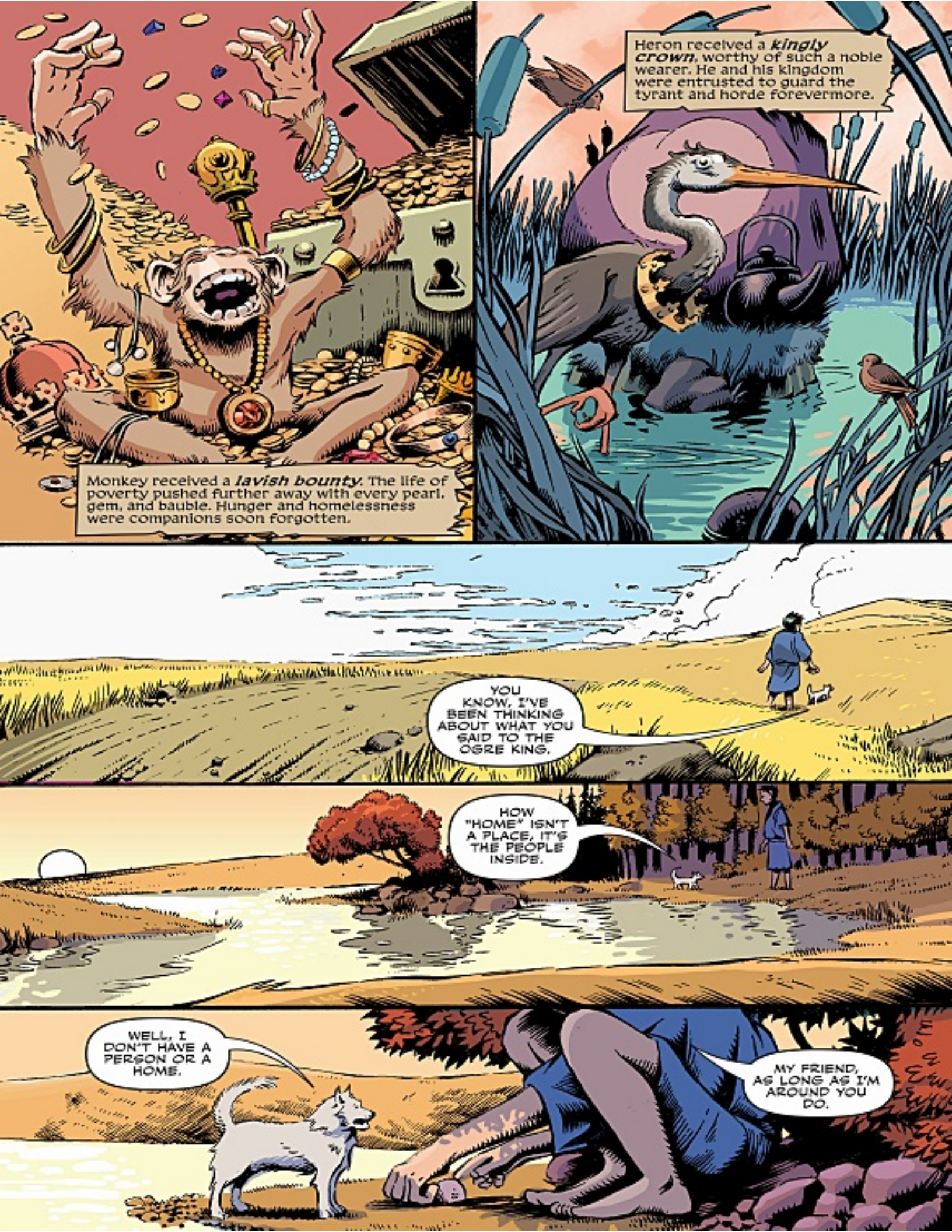
BAM!
RIGHT, TIME TO GET UP, YOU LOT! GATHER YOURSELVES AND YOUR INSTRUMENTS OF VIOLENCE. IT'S MORNING AND WE GOT A LOT OF PILLAGING TO DO. UP. UP. UP!

WHEN YA FINK BREAKFAST WILL BE, GRUM? I'M STARVIN'.
NOT NOW. HORSE IS TOUGH MEAT. SHAN'T BE LONG, THOUGH.
COME NOW, GRUM. YOU KNOW HOW I HATE CABBAGE.
OOF!
CURSED CABBAGES! ANGRY, CURSED CABBAGES RAIN FROM THE SKY!

WHAT MADNESS IS THIS?!
HA HAHA!
R-R-RUN! SOME GIANT CABBAGE DEMON COMES FOR OUR BONES!

I'M NOT AFRAID OF CABBAGES AND I'M NOT AFRAID OF ANY OVERGROWN TEENAGER! YOU AND YOUR STRANGE COMPATRIOTS WILL BREAK UPON MY AXE!
I'M HERE TO TALK. MAKE SURE YOU LISTEN.

I'VE COME A LONG WAY TO OFFER YOU A NEW HOME. IT'S COZY AND SAFE, JUST AS ANY HOME SHOULD BE.
A THOUSAND CURSES ON YOU! RELEASE ME! I RIGHTFULLY STOLE THIS LAND. IT'S MINE.
FORCIBLY REMOVING THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED HERE GAINED YOU NOTHING BUT STONE AND MUD. YOU ARE AS PATHETIC AS YOU ARE CRUEL.
HOME ISN'T A PLACE, IT'S THE PEOPLE THAT ARE THERE WHEN YOU WALK IN THE DOOR. LOOK AROUND, OGRE KING, WHO IS THERE FOR YOU NOW?
AFTER ALL YOUR MALICIOUS BULLYING AND OBJECTIONABLE BEHAVIOR, ALL YOU'VE REALLY ACHIEVED IS TO MAKE ONE GIANT VERY CROSS.
NO ONE SHOULD BE WITHOUT A HOME. A WARM AND ENCOURAGING TABLE AT WHICH THERE IS ALWAYS A PLACE SET FOR YOU. SOMEWHERE FREE OF JUDGEMENT, EVEN IF YOU'RE THIRTY FEET TALL.
The boy had done it. The stench of Ogre left the people's land, never to return. Almost as if spring had come twice, a chill left the air and if all wasn't *well*, at the very least it was *right*.


Monkey received a *lavish bounty*. The life of poverty pushed further away with every pearl, gem, and bauble. Hunger and homelessness were companions soon forgotten.
Heron received a *kingly crown*, worthy of such a noble wearer. He and his kingdom were entrusted to guard the tyrant and horde forevermore.
YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID TO THE OGRE KING.
HOW "HOME" ISN'T A PLACE, IT'S THE PEOPLE INSIDE.
WELL, I DON'T HAVE A PERSON OR A HOME.
MY FRIEND, AS LONG AS I'M AROUND YOU DO.

Dog was given a home, and a promise of rice cakes for a lifetime. Some days later the village folk and displaced band of survivors cheered as the Boy's head soon appeared above the furthest trees. None more glad than his parents.
The account of his journey was told and the villagers heralded him a hero. Those who said sour words of him before, now offered profound apologies for their faulty assumptions. For the villagers, a new light shone on the giant boy, and it was a kinder one.
I SPOKE UNTRUE WORDS, I'M GUILTY TO THE BRIM.
TO BELIEVE I THOUGHT YOU'D RIP US APART, LIMB FROM LIMB.
PLEASE FORGIVE OUR MISTAKES, WE WERE CALLOUS AND GRIM.
WITHOUT YOU, PEACH'S SON, THE BRIGHT FUTURE OF OUR VILLAGE WOULD BE SO DEPRESSINGLY DIM.
If "home" is where you find the light when all grows dark, if "home" heals the hurt, quells the anger, and fills the chasm of despair, then the Boy had found it.
SO THE NEIGHBORS GREW TO LIKE THE BOY?

AND EVERYONE WAS HAPPY?
YES, WHATEVER HARDSHIPS WERE TO COME FOR THE BOY, HE KNEW HIS HOME OFFERED PEACE AND ENCOURAGEMENT.
AFTER ALL, STONE, BRICK, AND MORTAR KEEP THE COLD OUT BUT THE WARMEST PART OF THE HOME SHOULD BE THE PEOPLE INSIDE.
THE END

A new tale spun next month...

the TAILOR'S DAUGHTER

story and art by BRANDON DAYTON

MERIT

HISTO